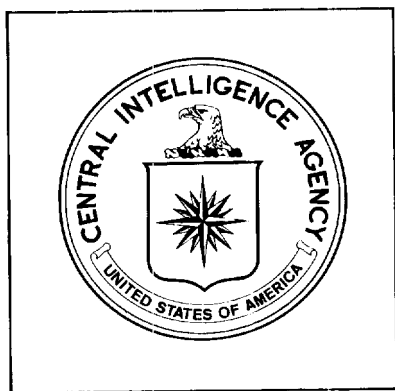


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

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Qatar

Problems of One-Man Rule

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 Emir Khalifah's effort to turn Qatar into an industrialized state while retaining traditional methods of rule is creating strains that could eventually threaten his hold on power. Although the Emir apparently recognizes the problems inherent in his autocratic style of rule, he is reluctant to give up his prerogatives or to pressure Qatar's sheikhs to surrender their privileges in the interest of a more efficient administration and of a more equitable distribution of Qatar's oil income. Criticism of Emir Khalifah, which heretofore almost never surfaced, is now a common topic of conversation even in official circles.

The Emir continues to insist on personally managing, with his small immediate staff, Qatari affairs, which have become increasingly complex in recent years. Khalifah's crushing workload and a lingering, though not serious, illness has left him debilitated and less able to cope with the affairs of state.

Adding to the Emir's burdens is the squabbling within the al-Thani ruling family over the position of Crown Prince, which Khalifah has not filled since coming to power in 1972. The main contenders for position of designated heir continue to maneuver within the fractious royal family, ignoring the Emir's pleas for solidarity in the face of growing social unrest. The Emir, however, fears that naming an heir would not resolve the issue, but only transform the present squabbling into a bitter power struggle. The main contenders are two of Khalifah's three sons, who hold the posts of commander of the armed forces and minister of petroleum, and a nephew, who is the commandant of the police force.

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The potential leadership problems created by the failure to name a Crown Prince was spotlighted for the Qataris by the assassination of Saudi King Faysal last March. The smooth transition in Saudi Arabia was also not lost on the al-Thanis and other politically influential groups in Qatar. Faysal's death shocked the Emir and prompted him to begin carrying a sidearm and to cut down on the number of his public appearances. He has not, however, taken other steps to tighten generally lax internal security controls against possible threats to his own life, and to other members of the royal family. (CONFIDENTIAL/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/BACKGROUND USE ONLY)



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Bangladesh

*Mujib Irked at Soviets;
Moves Against Local Communists*

President Mujib is irritated over what he views as Soviet tightfistedness regarding Bangladesh's economic problems. Probably because of this, Mujib is moving to reduce further the limited influence of Bangladesh's main Moscow-oriented political groups.

25X1C [REDACTED]
Mujib is upset at Moscow for pressing his government to repay a Soviet loan of grain extended in 1973 when the food situation in Bangladesh was particularly tight. Mujib has purchased grain commercially in order to partially repay the loan and ease the Soviet pressure, [REDACTED]

25X1C [REDACTED] Mujib reportedly has also turned down Soviet offers of additional MIG-21 aircraft and a proposed joint Soviet-Bengalee fishing program.

At home, [REDACTED] Mujib has ordered the closing of the offices of the Bangladesh Communist Party and another pro-Soviet party. Although all political parties other than the President's own national party were banned in February, the two pro-Moscow groups, which have been Mujib's allies in the past, were allowed to continue limited activities. Mujib reportedly has also decided to exclude all communists from the executive committee he will name to help run his party.

Mujib has long been disappointed with Soviet economic aid to Bangladesh, which has been considerably below what he had anticipated, and substantially less than what he has received from the US. Official relations between Dacca and Moscow are

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likely to remain friendly, however. Mujib is still appreciative of Soviet support for the Bengalee independence movement in 1971. More importantly, he knows that any real break between Bangladesh and the USSR would displease India, Bangladesh's key ally. The Indians, already somewhat uneasy about Dacca's interest in unfreezing its relations with Peking, would not want to see the Chinese have an opportunity to rival Soviet influence in Bangladesh. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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